

DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY
OFFICE OF PROGRAM SERVICES
PROGRAM PROFILE

At-Risk/Runaway Youth Program

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Who Can I Contact At DBHR For More Information?

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What Is The Program Description?

The 1995 At-Risk/Runaway Youth Act, also known as the “Becca” Bill, created the At-Risk/Runaway Youth Program. Additional legislation related to the program was enacted in 1996 and 1998. Through the program, at-risk and runaway youth can receive chemical dependency assessments and referral for both voluntary and involuntary treatment. Services to providers include technical assistance, information about the legislation, training on working with difficult-to-treat patients, help in developing policies and procedures, and aid with transfer of patients between modalities or agencies. Medical necessity reviews of Becca admissions to residential chemical dependency treatment to monitor treatment appropriateness are also conducted.

Parents of at-risk youth are provided information that explains available options and how to access treatment services, gives direction in filing “Child In Need of Services” (CHINS) or “At-Risk Youth” (ARY) petitions with juvenile courts, and assists in making a prioritized application for assessment and treatment if the youth is on a CHINS or ARY petition.

What Populations Are Served/ Who Is Eligible For These Services?

Chemically dependent youth in Washington State who are beyond their parents’ control and/or are chronic runaways are eligible. This is estimated at between 3-4% of the 45,000 youth ages 13-19 (or 1,350-2,250 youth), according to 1990 census data, who are identified as being in need of chemical dependency treatment. Services are provided for low-income, at-risk youth.

How Many People Are Served During The Biennium?

The average number of Becca youth admissions per biennium is about 400.

What Is The Biennial Funding Amount and Source(s)?

NA

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What Would Be The Impact If This Program Was No Longer Available?

There would be less accountability for youth engaging in high-risk behavior and fewer options for parents in their attempts to hold their youth accountable. The Becca bill has been helpful in providing early intervention for youth engaging in high-risk behavior.

What Agencies Collaborate With DBHR To Deliver These Services?

The DBHR At-Risk/Runaway Youth Coordinator acts as liaison for Becca services to other divisions within the Department of Social and Health Services including the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA).

What Are The Sources For Program Data or More Information?

- Becca database.
- *Treatment Outcomes for Youth Admitted to Residential Chemical Dependency Treatment Under the Provisions of the "Becca" Bill*. Conducted by Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute University of Washington, December 12, 1997.
- *Implementation of the "Becca" Bill, A Process Evaluation-Final Report* Revised February 1998.
- *Washington Kids Count, Policies to Assist At Risk or Runaway Chemically Dependent Youth*, September 1999.
- Washington State Institute for Public Policy, *At Risk and Runaway Youth in Washington State: Outcomes for Youth Admitted to Secure Crisis Residential Centers and Mandatory Chemical Dependency Treatment*, December 2001.